



**Quarterly Report**  
**FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA:**  
**POLITICAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION**  
**USAID Cooperative Agreement No. EE-A-00-98-00028-00**  
**July 1 to September 30, 2001**

**I. SUMMARY**

The outbreak of politically motivated violence in Macedonia in February 2001 has greatly inhibited the country's democratization progress. Ethnic conflict, which since 1991 has plagued virtually every former Yugoslav republic except Macedonia, finally emerged this year as a major obstacle to the country's political and economic development. In spite of the recent cessation of hostilities, considerable uncertainty remains in regards to Macedonia's ability to overcome the political and social challenges presented by an ethnically divided society.

This quarter's activity was severely impacted by the ongoing conflict in Macedonia and the evacuation of NDI's expatriate personnel at the end of June. Despite these events, NDI was able to make some progress through NDI local staff contact with members and staff of parliament and the continuation of the Parliamentary Internship program. In September, NDI brought its local staff to Washington D.C. for an extended session of professional development training.

During this quarter, NDI created a revised plan of action to adjust its objectives and activities to the current political environment. The plan focuses on the Macedonian parliament as the key representative institution that will play a vital role in the country's political stabilization. Other actors, notably political parties, will have pivotal roles in building a stable, democratic political system. As Macedonia prepares for crucial parliamentary elections in early 2002, NDI stands ready to assist parliament, political parties, and civic organizations in managing political conflict and creating an open, participatory electoral process. NDI submitted this workplan at the end of the quarter and is currently awaiting USAID approval. Due to the delays in programming, the Institute will also seek a no-cost extension for the program.

**II. BACKGROUND**

NDI has provided democratization assistance in Macedonia since 1993 in the areas of civic education, election monitoring, voter education, political party building and parliamentary development. Since 1999, NDI has worked to increase the capacity of

members of parliament (MPs) in their roles as legislators and elected political representatives. Such capacity building is achieved through training MPs and their staff on caucus operations, commission functions, and constituent relations. Considerable progress has been achieved in the transfer of political and legislative skills to individual members of parliament, and promising institutional developments have occurred. Still, inter-ethnic political conflict bordering on open and prolonged warfare has impeded NDI's program implementation and has laid bare important, persistent challenges to the country's stability and therefore its democratization.

Since February 2001, violent conflict has kept Macedonia on the edge of civil war. The conflict has greatly disrupted relations between ethnic Albanian and ethnic Macedonians and inhibited the country's political and economic development. Months of fighting between Macedonian government forces and the National Liberation Army (NLA) has displaced thousands of Macedonian citizens and deepened pre-existing tensions between the two groups. Drawing its membership from ethnic Albanians in Macedonia as well as from veterans of the now-disbanded Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), the NLA's stated goal is improved political and economic rights for Macedonia's ethnic Albanians.

In May 2001, a multi-ethnic "Unity Government" was formed to respond to the crisis and to provide unified political leadership for the country. Composed of Macedonia's four largest political parties the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization–Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE), Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM), the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), and the Party of Democratic Prosperity (PDP) the coalition was, however, unable to respond politically or militarily, and gradually lost public confidence. Throughout May and June, representatives from the European Union (EU) and the United States attempted to help the two sides find a solution to the conflict and to create the conditions necessary for a temporary deployment of NATO troops once a ceasefire and political settlement were achieved.

An increased level of violence and anti-Western sentiment prompted USAID in June to evacuate its staff and requested that its implementing partners to do the same. For security reasons, NDI evacuated its resident representative in June, and since that time, local staff has kept the NDI office open and continued its work.

In July 2001, international envoys from the United States, EU and NATO began negotiating a settlement that would address many of the ethnic Albanian political demands in exchange for a cessation of hostilities. The resulting Framework Agreement, signed in Ohrid on August 13, outlines a number of constitutional amendments intended to improve the status of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia, which include the removal of the constitutional reference to the Macedonian state as the "national state of all Macedonian people," an increase from 5 percent to 25 percent of the proportion of Albanians in the police force, recognition of Albanian as an additional official language in areas with an Albanian population of at least 20 percent, and a limited decentralization of certain authority to local institutions. In accordance with the Ohrid peace plan, the beginning of

parliamentary debate and any steps toward ratification would be contingent on three phases of NATO weapons collection.

In late August, NATO began deployment of Operation Essential Harvest to collect a minimum of 3,300 voluntarily surrendered NLA weapons. By August 30 NATO had collected more than one-third of the target weapons, thus meeting a key condition for the Macedonian parliament to begin debating the political reforms laid out in the agreement. Furthermore, in spite of initial skepticism about the ability of the Operation to succeed within the limited timeframe, roughly 3,850 weapons were collected by the end of September.

Despite the success of the NATO mission and the fulfillment of the conditions required for the parliament to begin approval and implementation of the Ohrid Agreement, the parliament has been slow to act. After nearly a month of arduous debate, on October 1, parliament approved tentative drafts for 15 constitutional amendments by a slim majority, including changes to the preamble of the constitution to remove the reference to the "national state of the Macedonian people," increased recognition of the Albanian language, and increased representation of ethnic Albanians in the police. However, two-thirds of the deputies will need to ratify the changes, and hard-liners on both side of the divide continue attempts to delay and disrupt the process.

NDI remains committed to the idea that parliament is the central governing institution in Macedonia that, with the proper tools, can serve as a mechanism for conflict prevention, political stability and in turn, democratization. In the past, NDI has worked with parliament to better enable its members and staff to fulfill their roles as the principal democratic representatives of a body of citizens. In preparation for scheduled elections on January 27, 2002, NDI is planning a number of changes to its in-country activities. In the hopes of renewing public confidence in the political process, a pre-election program will be the initial focus of work. However, in the long term, NDI intends to continue its work with parliamentarians, their staff, and the NGO community in order to increase the responsiveness of elected officials to their constituents and to help develop institutional capacity to respond during times of crisis.

### **III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

Since the evacuation of NDI's resident representative in June, NDI's local staff has provided daily updates on political events and maintained contact with Macedonian political leaders and parliamentary staff as much as possible. Despite the closure of the university, the interns participating in NDI's Parliamentary Internship Program continued to report to the offices of their members and assist with research, drafting, and other tasks as requested by the MPs. Despite NDI's insistence that the interns not place themselves in any possible danger, they displayed great dedication to their work by visiting the parliament on a regular basis. As stated above, NDI's primary focus this quarter was on skills building for its local staff.

## **Staff Training**

In December 2000, NDI conducted in-depth staff interviews and evaluations to determine what training was needed to build a stronger, results-oriented focus within NDI-Macedonia's local staff. In January 2001, a two-day staff retreat focused on building a more effective team-based environment, and in April a half-day training designed to improve internal communication and create a set of office norms was held. To build upon these experiences, NDI-Macedonia's local staff requested additional training in communications (both interpersonal and external), project design and conflict management.

At the suggestion of USAID, NDI-Macedonia's local staff interviewed the staff of other USAID implementers, such as the Institute for Sustainable Communities, to learn more about educational opportunities. The staff discovered that a number of courses in project management training were available, primarily in the United States. Based on program needs, timing and security concerns, the decision was made to conduct the training in Washington, D.C. The professional development program was conducted between September 10 and 21 and included a three-day project management training, a two-day training in conflict management, a visit to the Maryland state house in Annapolis, two "shadow" days on Capitol Hill, and a public presentation on NDI programming in Macedonia.

### *Project Management Training*

From September 10 to 12, the staff took part in a project management training course to increase staff's ability to manage programs with more independence and to gain better understanding of strategic planning, time management, communication, and teamwork. Eugene Spigle, a professional with 35 years of experience in project management with corporations and the United Nations conducted the training. In consultation with NDI, Spigle designed a training agenda to specifically meet the needs of the Macedonian staff, which covered the following topics:

- Project planning and organization
- Design and definition of project objectives
- Conducting assessments
- Schedule development
- Project reporting and evaluation

### *Visit to Annapolis*

On September 14, the staff traveled to Annapolis, Maryland, to tour the State Capitol and learn about the legislative process on the state level. During a half-day meeting with Karl Aro, executive director of the Department of Legislative Services, the group received a full briefing on the legislative process, rules of procedure, and the division of powers and responsibilities between the executive and legislative branches of the government. The briefing illustrated the differences among the types of legislatures

and how differences in the distribution of power among various government branches affect policymaking.

### *Conflict Management Training*

On September 17 and 18, both field and DC Macedonia staff participated in a two-day training on conflict management to further their capacity to work effectively as a team, learn how to discuss difficult issues in a non-combative manner, improve communication skills and apply negotiation skills. Lewis Rasmussen, former trainer with the United States Institute of Peace and OSCE Bosnia, conducted the course and covered the topics of communicating in a professional environment, managing criticism effectively, relationship building skills, strategic planning and problem solving, understanding the sources and dynamics of conflict, and negotiation skills.

Participants were required to role-play and in one example, the staff was asked to alternately play the part of both an OSCE staff member and an ethnic-Albanian engaged in a “heated” discussion on a local disturbance issue. This enabled participants to apply skills learned in “diffusing” difficult and/or potentially violent individuals and situations. In playing the role of the OSCE staff member, the individual was required to imagine himself/herself as an outside member of the community and understand the needs, and not only the positions, of all concerned. A second role-play drew on a real-life experience based on one of NDI’s programs in-country and required the use of newly taught negotiation and strategic thinking skills. In this example, the staff was required to persuade a reluctant and high-ranking member of the parliamentary staff to agree to certain aspects of new programming. In order to succeed, it was necessary to use an approach that took the needs and constraints of the other individual into consideration.

### *Capitol Hill Experience*

To learn about office organization, committee functions and hearings, and constituent relations, on September 19 and 20, NDI staff shadowed Capitol Hill staff members as they conducted daily business. The staff was placed in the offices of Senator Hillary Clinton D-NY, Senator Bill Nelson D-FL, Senator Paul Wellstone D-MN, Representative Gary Ackerman D-NY, Representative Steve Largent R-OK, and in the office of the House International Relations Committee. NDI’s Macedonia staff commented on the high level of professionalism in the offices compared with that in the Macedonian parliament and expressed the value of witnessing such a “results-oriented environment” firsthand. This opportunity provided, “an excellent insight into how the staff performs their multiple tasks and duties in the offices,” and, “we learned about the important roles and the functions of the committees.”

### *“Brown Bag” Presentation*

On September 21, the staff made a presentation to NDI/Washington and representatives from USAID regarding their work on the Institute’s numerous programs in Macedonia. Each of the six visiting staff used the opportunity to describe his or her

individual work, beginning from the program's inception, its impact to date, and results and accomplishments. This was the first experience for most in making a formal group presentation to an audience, either inside or outside of Macedonia. The previous two weeks of training significantly aided in their understanding of the necessary components of a successful presentation. The USAID representatives requested that a similar presentation be made upon their (and NDI's) return to Skopje.

#### **IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The evacuation of NDI's resident representative at the end of June 2001 along with a tense political environment caused by the ongoing conflict brought most in-country program activity to a halt. During this quarter, NDI's ability to conduct the majority of the parliamentary development program was thwarted. However, the Parliamentary Internship program was able to function during this time.

**Objective: An expanded group of parliamentary interns increases legislative research skills and begins to work outside the party caucus groups in other parliamentary domains, such as commissions.**

**Result:** After the conflict subsides and parliament resumes normal working conditions, several members of parliament plan to introduce legislation drafted by NDI's parliamentary interns.

#### **V. EVALUATION**

Given the events of the last two quarters, NDI has had to revise its 2001 objectives to fit political realities. In October, the Institute submitted a revised description of program activities and is currently awaiting mission approval. NDI is also discussing the possibility of a no-cost extension through July for the cooperative agreement in order to complete activities. NDI anticipates focusing on new objectives before, during and shortly after the next parliamentary election cycle (anticipated in the first quarter of 2002). Following the election of a new class of parliamentarians and a more stable political environment, NDI would continue its parliamentary and political party program.

In consultation with USAID, the following objectives will be suspended until after the election period.

Objective: A professional nonpartisan staff is created or in the process of creation.

Objective: Parliamentary commissions conduct public hearings to incorporate citizen input into legislation and strengthen legislative deliberation and oversight.

Objective: Members of parliament and parliamentary staff have skills with which to conduct legislative affairs through expanded information technology.

Objective: Members of parliament and non-governmental organizations strengthen their interaction on legislation.

Objective: Members of parliament employ constituent relation techniques that contribute to parliamentary accountability and citizen representation.

Objective: An expanded group of parliamentary interns increases legislative research skills and begins to work outside the party caucus groups in other parliamentary domains, such as commissions.

In response to the ongoing conflict and impending elections, currently scheduled for January 27, 2002, NDI is planning a number of changes to its in-country activities. NDI's program would aim to increase the individual conflict management skills of various actors in society – politicians, party members, NGO leaders, and members of the media – in an effort to rebuild public trust in institutions and the political process. In its revised action plan, NDI has proposed the following objectives for the election period:

#### Objectives

- Orient Macedonian politicians toward constructive leadership and engagement with citizens in the peace process.
- Provide technical assistance in constitutional amendment drafting and/or interpretation.
- Provide communications strategies so that MPs can approach constituents and foster dialogue about the impact of the Framework Agreement and the resulting constitutional amendments.
- Help create a pre-election environment that encourages fair and more transparent elections.
- Assist in reducing conflict among political parties before, during, and after the 2002 parliamentary elections.

## **VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

Pending mission approval, NDI proposes the following activities for its work in the next quarter and beyond. For a more detailed description, please see *NDI Macedonia proposed plan of action: October 2001 – March 2002*.

### **Immediate Plan of Action**

Timeline: Month One

Activity: Macedonia's parliamentary leaders were excluded from playing a substantive role in the negotiations on the Framework Agreement. As a result, parliamentary group coordinators (caucus leaders) now have the task of passing a number of constitutional changes mandated by an agreement that they did not negotiate and in many cases do not support. The deliberate minimization of parliament's role in the negotiation process has created among political leaders feelings of mistrust toward the international community as well as each other.

As a first step in an ongoing process, NDI would bring a prominent U.S. politician to Macedonia to conduct a series of one-on-one and group consultations with Macedonian politicians of all political parties in parliament. The emphasis will be on the important role that members of parliament (MPs) have in this process. Beyond highlighting the necessary responsibilities of MPs, the consultant would provide support and counsel to help MPs cope with their dual roles as representatives and political party members. NDI believes that a former member of Congress or U.S. administration official would be best suited for this role.

### **Short-Term Plan of Action**

Timeline: Month Two

Activities:

**1. Focus Groups.** To accurately assess the public's view of parliament, the difficulties faced in implementing the Framework Agreement, and the elections climate, NDI would sponsor a series of focus groups. Before members of parliament can initiate effective contact with their constituents, they need a broader and deeper understanding of current attitudes and priorities. Political party activists and civil society actors also need such information to better craft their respective messages. The data and analysis generated by these focus groups would aid MPs, candidates, and NGOs in framing their interactions with the public. If properly prepared and appropriately released to the local media, the results of the focus groups could also provide an important contribution to future public discussions.

**2. Roundtables.** In the weeks following, a series of roundtables would bring together Macedonian politicians with their counterparts from other societies in conflict (such as Northern Ireland and Spain). Discussions would center on methods of managing conflict attempted in these countries and their relative success or failure. The roundtables would include practical advice on interacting with constituents in order to facilitate effective public discussion about constitutional changes. The group would discuss methods for coping with the demands placed on MPs by their party leadership during crisis and post-crisis periods. Finally, since MPs' ability to draft and interpret constitutional amendments remains limited, NDI would provide experts to analyze and discuss the constitutional changes required by the Framework Agreement.



Separate roundtables with community leaders from societies in conflict would be conducted in order to incorporate the perspective of civil society into the broader discussion. In cooperation with other USAID implementers in Macedonia, these roundtables would attract NGO and media representatives as well as public opinion leaders.

## **Elections-Focused Plan of Action**

Timeline: Months Two through Five

Activities:

### **1. Elections Monitoring**

During the September 2000 local election cycle, NDI's training of volunteers from the domestic monitoring organization Citizens for Citizens ("C4C") reached more than 1,500 monitors. For the upcoming January 2002 elections, C4C would expand its oversight of the election process and provide the necessary voice of civil society in the following manner:

*Media Monitoring.* C4C would assess the accuracy and fairness of print, radio, and television coverage afforded to candidates and political parties during the campaign season. To assist in this learning process, NDI would sponsor a study trip for a select group of C4C members to observe the operations of Memo98, an NDI-affiliated Slovak media monitoring organization. Throughout the election cycle, C4C would analyze not only the relative treatment of candidates and political parties by the media but also substantive policy issues, such as interethnic tolerance. Through publication of its work, C4C would aim to encourage the fair treatment of all communities in the media.

*Voter Education.* To increase citizens' awareness of their rights and responsibilities on election day, C4C would conduct a countrywide voter education campaign. Using information gained through the focus groups, C4C would promote citizens' active participation in the election processes and work to increase the level of understanding of democratic principles in the country.

*Expansion of Trained Monitors.* For the January 2002 parliamentary elections, C4C intends to recruit, train, and deploy more than 3,000 volunteer monitors. NDI would provide technical assistance through a train-the-trainers program. Should NDI's personnel not be able to return to Macedonia by October 15, this training would occur in a nearby country (possibly Slovenia).

*Strengthened Relationship with the Media.* Whether C4C is soliciting volunteers or issuing its final report on election day, a professional relationship with the media is essential to build credibility as a nonpartisan observer of the political climate. NDI would continue to provide strategic and technical advice to C4C on the effective use of media.

*Coordination of all Monitoring Efforts.* During the election period, NDI would cooperate with the relevant international institutions (OSCE, OHDIR, and the Council of Europe, etc) as well as coordinate the efforts in Macedonia by election monitoring organizations based in other countries (i.e., GONG, CeSID, ENEMO).

## **2. Political Party Development/Candidate School**

In conjunction with the Nansen Dialogue Center, a conflict management skills-building organization, NDI would conduct an intensive program for political party activists and candidates in order to foster attitudes that stimulate dialogue between individuals and groups with different stances and to provide practical advice on negotiation skills, risk assessment, and violence reduction. NDI intends to solicit applicants for the Emerging Political Leaders Program from participants in this training program (please see the Macedonian Program Description 2002-2004 for a full description). NDI would incorporate the results of the focus groups into the program. In addition to election preparation techniques, participants would learn ways to support democratic participation, protection of human rights, and conflict management methods appropriate to the election environment.

Specific training topics would include the following:

- Office organization (choosing staff, recruiting volunteers, fundraising, and strategic planning);
- Communications (message creation and dissemination);
- Voter contact and identification;
- GOTV
- Political party monitoring
- Conflict management skills (training provided with Nansen Dialogue Center)

Should NDI personnel not be able to return to Macedonia by October 15 for security reasons, this training would occur in a nearby country (possibly Slovenia).

## **3. Pre-election Mission/Elections Watch**

Much like C4C, the international community needs to play a role in ensuring transparent, free and fair elections. Prior to the 2002 parliamentary elections, an NDI delegation of internationally recognized experts would assess the elections climate in Macedonia. NDI would issue public updates that analyze the political environment in the lead-up to the election.